



What Is My Child Learning?

Overview

"The Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI) is a state-led effort designed to improve educational outcomes for students by developing a set of consistent clear kindergarten through twelfth grade (K -12) academic standards in English language arts and mathematics."¹¹ The CCSSI has been adopted by more than 40 states (including Michigan), and is an effective measure for gauging your child's academic progress.



The Common Core State Standards Initiative defines the knowledge and skills students should gain within their K-12 education careers so that they will graduate high school able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in workforce training programs. The standards:

- are aligned with college and work expectations.
- are clear, understandable and consistent.
- include rigorous content and application of knowledge through higher order skills.
- build upon strengths and lessons of current state.
- are informed by other top performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society.
- are evidence-based.

Below is a brief outline of what your child will learn in each grade level based on the Common Core State Standards Initiative¹²

Important Topics in Kindergarten

English Language Arts and Literacy

- Using knowledge of letters and letter-sound correspondences to figure out how to spell words as they sound
- Reading and understanding a story designed for early readers

Mathematics

- Counting to tell the number of objects (this will not be written work; ask the teacher for his or her observations of your child's progress in this area)
- Solving addition and subtraction word problems

Important Topics in 1st Grade

English Language Arts and Literacy

- Reading grade-level text with understanding and fluency
- Learning from, enjoying, and getting facts from books he or she reads and to which he or she listens

Mathematics

- Adding with a sum of 20 or less and subtracting from a number 20 or less (this will not be written work; ask the teacher for his or her observations of your child's progress in this area)
- Using understanding of place value to add and subtract
- Solving addition and subtraction word problems

Important Topics in 2nd Grade

English Language Arts and Literacy

- Reading grade-level books and stories with understanding and fluency
- Building a foundation of knowledge through reading and listening to books in history, social studies, science, and other subjects

Mathematics

- Using understanding of place value to add and subtract
- Solving more challenging addition and subtraction word problems
- Measuring lengths and solving word problems involving addition and subtraction of lengths

Important Topics in 3rd Grade

English Language Arts and Literacy

- Reading grade-level books, stories, poems, and articles fluently
- Writing and speaking well, following rules of punctuation and grammar

Mathematics

- Multiplication and division
- Fractions

Important Topics in 4th Grade

English Language Arts and Literacy

- Comprehending a range of grade-level stories, poems, and informational texts such as biographies, articles, or guidebooks about history, science, or the arts
- Building understanding of relationships between words and nuances in word



meanings — synonyms, antonyms, idioms — and using this knowledge to convey ideas precisely

Mathematics

- Doing arithmetic and solving word problems with multi-digit numbers
- Doing arithmetic and solving word problems with fractions

Important Topics in 5th Grade

English Language Arts and Literacy

- Reading closely and drawing evidence from grade-level fiction and nonfiction materials, including the ability to quote accurately from them when answering questions
- Adjusting communications to accomplish a particular purpose (e.g., providing more background information for audiences who do not know the topic well)

Mathematics

- Multiplying and dividing fractions and solving related word problems
- Decimals (concepts and arithmetic)
- Volume (concepts and problem-solving)

Important Topics in 6th Grade

English Language Arts and Literacy

- Reading closely and citing evidence from grade-level fiction and nonfiction to support an analysis of what the materials say
- Developing a rich vocabulary of complex and sophisticated words and using them to speak and write more precisely and coherently

Mathematics

- Analyzing and solving problems using concepts of ratios and working with variables and expressions
- Analyzing and solving word problems using equations

Important Topics in 7th Grade

English Language Arts and Literacy

- Reading closely and citing several sources of evidence from grade-level fiction and nonfiction works to support an analysis of what the material says
- Developing a rich vocabulary of complex and sophisticated words and using them to speak and write more precisely and coherently

Mathematics

- Analyzing proportional relationships
- Arithmetic with positive and negative numbers
- Solving equations quickly and accurately and writing equations to solve word problems

Important Topics in 8th Grade

English Language Arts and Literacy

- Reading closely and drawing evidence from grade-level fiction and nonfiction works that most strongly supports an analysis of the material
- Developing a rich vocabulary of complex and sophisticated words and using them to speak and write more precisely and coherently

Mathematics

- Linear equations with one and two variables
- Functions
- Congruence and similarity of geometric figures

Important Topics in High School English

- Focusing, reading deliberately and slowly, and rereading (when necessary) complex fiction and nonfiction materials
- Becoming skilled at gathering information, evaluating sources, and citing material accurately
- Asserting and defending claims, conveying what he or she understands about what he or she has read and researched
- Speaking clearly and appropriately, listening at when discussing findings and evidence, and building on others' good ideas while expressing his or her own ideas persuasively
- Learning to see individual words as part of a network of other words: understanding words that have similar literal meanings but different connotations (Ex: bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute)

Strategies

The following are helpful ideas that you can use to apply your knowledge of CCSI standards to your child's educational achievement:¹³

- 1. Build relationships with your child's teacher.**
 - a. You can refer to this outline. It may help you better understand your child's curriculum and class assignments.
- 2. Set high expectations for your child and help him or her reach them.**
 - a. As a parent, you play an important role in your child's educational experience.
- 3. Help your child learn more or seek help if needed in a subject area.**
 - a. If your child needs additional help in a subject area or wants to learn more about a topic, contact his or her school for information about tutoring, clubs, or other resources.

4. Use this information to develop questions to ask at parent-teacher conferences.

- a. The National Parent Teacher Association offers this suggestion for a beneficial, interactive conference:
- Is my child's work in this area satisfactory?
 - How could it be better?
 - Is my child on track?
 - How can I help him/her at home?

Learning about these academic standards will help you understand what your child should be learning at each grade-level.

Additional Information & Resources

1. Complete copies of PTA's *Parents' Guide to Student Success* are available in English and Spanish at: <http://pta.org/4446.htm>
2. Michigan Department of Education, Grade-Level Content Expectations http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-22709_28463-196282--,00.html
3. Michigan Department of Education, Common Core State Standards Initiative http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Common_Core_QandA_311926_7.pdf